

BIG BEAR AREA REGIONAL WASTEWATER AGENCY

Special Board Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Special Meeting of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency was called to order by Chair Miller at 2:00 p.m. on March 19, 2024 at 121 Palomino Drive, Big Bear City, California.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Miller, Chair
Rick Herrick, Vice-Chair
John Russo, Director
Kendi Segovia, Director
Larry Walsh, Director

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

David Lawrence, General Manager
Christine Bennett, Finance Manager
Bridgette Burton, Administrative Services Manager/Board Secretary
John Shimmin, Plant Manager

OTHERS

Glenn Jacklin, General Manager, Big Bear City Community Services District
Reggie Lamson, General Manager, City of Big Bear Lake, Department of Water and Power
Steve Ludecke, President, Big Bear Municipal Water District

Members of the public who signed in included:

Maureen Auer, Big Bear Lake
Pam Balch, Office of Assemblyman Lackey
Michael Beveridge, Big Bear Lake
Jeff Cooper, Big Bear City
Wendy Corey, Big Bear Lake
Patrice Duncan, Sugarloaf
Pat Enyart, Sugarloaf
Steve Foulkes, Big Bear Lake
Brian Gilligan, Big Bear Lake
Ron K., Big Bear Lake
Annette Karnes, Big Bear Lake
Gary and Judy Keller, Big Bear City
Aime Kinne, Big Bear Lake
Jordan Lowe, Southern California Mountains Foundation

Bobbi Martinez, Big Bear City
Corrine More, Office of Congressman Obernolte
Kelly Ohlson, Big Bear City
Bob and Jo Rowe, Big Bear City
David Runt, Fawnskin
Tom Sitton, Big Bear City
Christine Smith, Big Bear City
Sandy Steers, Fawnskin
Margaret Tiefenthaler, Big Bear City
Alaine Uthus, Big Bear City
Marie Ward, Sugarloaf
Bob Ybarra, Sugarloaf

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Director Russo

3. **PUBLIC FORUM**

None

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

5. **NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

5.A. Replenish Big Bear Options

The Finance Manager and Administrative Services Manager/Board Secretary presented information on where Replenish Big Bear is today, current commitments, recent questions, and options to move forward.

The Governing Board clarified the project cost of \$64M is the adopted project cost plus a substantial contingency requested by the EPA, the WIFIA Loan is a draw loan and required a five-year rate schedule, numbers are driven by design and engineers, Prop 218 protest hearings were conducted by the Big Bear City Community Services District (CSD) and the City of Big Bear Lake, rate impact to San Bernardino County CSA 53B, total commitments, and the responsibility of the Governing Board to make sure that the project sticks to the budget throughout the process.

The Governing Board discussed the possibility of the project going over budget, the potential for additional grants to reduce the loan amount, the Build America Buy America (BABA) waiver and loss of the BABA waiver increasing project costs by at least 25%, the amendment language required by the EPA, Prop 218 protest hearing options, the Sand Canyon recharge plan and estimated cost, the draft

Environmental Impact Report, an accounting method for Program Water, the steps needed before agreements with the Big Bear Municipal Water District (MWD) and Big Bear Mountain Resorts (BBMR) can be completed and what happens if the agreements are not executed.

Further discussion included operation of the DWP and CSD interconnection, in lieu Program Water for the Stickleback, BBMR's contract for lake water, the Colorado Regional Water Quality Control Board permit for Lucerne Valley, cost of living increases for various groups, and the possibility of repaying grant reimbursements.

The Governing Board adjourned at 4:00 p.m. and readjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Tom Sitton, Big Bear City, stated the proposed project and injection of Program Water is not right for the Big Bear Valley and there are other ways to meet water security issues.

Patrice Duncan, Sugarloaf, stated CSD bringing up concerns is appropriate, and Big Bear Lake and Fawnskin are going to see immediate benefits. She further encouraged letters of intent with MWD and BBMR.

Gary Keller, Big Bear City, expressed concern over the cost-benefit for CSD customers, and stated a recent article he read said the Stickleback was being transported to Bluff Lake by Fish and Wildlife.

Alaine Uthus, President of the Big Bear Association of Realtors, attended to show continued support of Replenish Big Bear and stated the project is critical for the stability and livelihood of the Valley.

Steve Foulkes, Big Bear Lake, stated this is a critical project for long-term viability of the district; water and the Lake are critical for the community. He further commented that agreements are necessary to move forward, and something has changed when comparing 1977 Lake models.

Bobbi Martinez, Big Bear City, shared her perspective of struggling locals, business owners, and visitors. She further commented that people do not want any more taxes and those on fixed incomes will be affected.

Margaret Tiefenthaler, Big Bear City, expressed concern over seniors in the Valley on limited incomes and local governing bodies forcing policies. She further stated that the project should have been on the ballot years ago.

Amie Kinne, Big Bear Lake, stated she supports Replenish Big Bear and encouraged the Board to find a way forward and salvage the project.

Bob Ybarra, Sugarloaf, is concerned about water staying in the east end and not having an agreement with MWD.

Kristina Nehls, Big Bear Grizzly Newspaper, commented about Sand Canyon construction, the Stickleback, pipeline costs, and that the east end residents will be paying for those items. She further stated that there is no value to the project.

Carol Neu commented about rates, total costs, the ski resort water contract, and a disparity of water costs between residents and the ski resorts. She further stated that stakeholders need to get together to determine contributions/commitments.

Michael Beveridge, Big Bear Lake, stated it will likely cost \$40-\$50 million to keep sending BBARWA water to Lucerne Valley with zero benefit and he believes that is the elephant in the room.

John Jackson, Visit Big Bear, stated the Lake is the number one attraction and listed new Lake activities. He further stated he supports Replenish Big Bear.

The Board Secretary read the following letters into the record:

Tarl Wood wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated the project is one of the single most important things we can do for our community and does not want the project to die.

Danielle Goldsmith wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear, understands the cost of the project, but feels that continuing to do nothing or not finding a suitable solution to keeping all the water we can in the Valley is not the answer.

Kailee Saderup wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and asked to continue the project for the future.

D Rahill wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated that it needs to move forward for the future of the Valley.

Darrell and Carol Mulvihill wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated the project is a win-win for Valley residents.

Will Rahill wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated the project is a necessary investment in our Valley's future with a high ROI and will keep our economy strong.

Indy Rahill wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated we need to come together as a community to avoid situations like the fight over the Colorado River.

Melissa Evans-Gray wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated there will be a time when water in California will be worth its weight in gold and we need to keep our natural water that mother nature provides here in the Valley.

Linda Goldsmith wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated we need to look to the future and make sure there is always enough supply for our new and growing population.

Sunny Hollenbaugh wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated taking away the support of this won't be good for our town in the long run and keeping water in the Valley is essential for the future of our economy, recreation, and underground aquifers.

Jon Bidwell, Big Bear Professional Firefighters Association Union President, wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated he recently became aware of potential obstacles hindering the progress of our much needed project and urged the Board to work together to overcome obstacles and keep the project on track.

Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh wrote in support of Replenish Big Bear and stated implementing a plan for water sustainability is of vital importance to the community.

The Governing Board discussed the three options for Replenish Big Bear.

Director Segovia presented a motion, seconded by Director Walsh, for the Governing Board to direct staff to conduct an advisory vote and secure agreements with the Big Bear Municipal Water District and Big Bear Mountain Resorts.

Vice-Chair Herrick offered a substitute motion, seconded by Chair Miller and carried, for the Governing Board to direct staff to bring additional information to the March 27, 2024 regular meeting regarding 1) an agreement with the Big Bear Municipal Water District, 2) an agreement between the City of Big Bear Lake, Department of Water and Power and Big Bear Mountain Resorts, 3) the advisory election process, 4) WIFIA and grant deadlines, 5) Program Water equity, and 6) equivalent dwelling unit calculation methods for Member Agencies. The substitute motion passed.

Ayes: Herrick, Miller, Walsh
Noes: Russo, Segovia
Absent: None
Abstain: None

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Governing Board, Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

ATTEST: Bridgette Burton
Bridgette Burton, Secretary to the Governing Board
Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency